

**Economic and Social
Council**Distr.
GENERALCES/2001/23
12 April 2001

Original: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**Forty-ninth plenary session
(Geneva, 11-13 June 2001)**THE MONTREUX CONFERENCE ON “STATISTICS, DEVELOPMENT AND
HUMAN RIGHTS” AND ITS FOLLOW-UP¹****I. Introduction**

1. Three years ago the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO) and the Swiss Development and Co-operation Agency (SDC) decided to jointly organize an international conference focusing on the application of statistical methods to the analysis of development and human rights issues. The aim of this initiative was not of a mere academic nature: the intention was **to put in evidence and to promote the potential that is concealed in statistical information and methods for the reinforcement of mechanisms aiming at monitoring the achievements of human development and the respect of human rights.**

2. The Executive Committees of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) willingly endorsed this aim as well as the multidisciplinary approach proposed by the Swiss organizers and thus accepted to host the initiative under the aegis of the scientific authority of both institutions. Moreover, heads of many international organizations, UN programs and major international non-governmental organizations active in the fields of development and human rights enthusiastically supported the initiative and committed to deliver policy-oriented keynote addresses.

3. The Conference on « **Statistics, Development and Human Rights** » was therefore held in Montreux, Switzerland, on 4-8 September 2000, gathering 740 persons from 123 countries and 37 international organizations. Its success went far beyond the expectations of the organizers: it gave rise for the first time to a lively, serious and fruitful encounter between **three groups of experts: statisticians, development specialists and human rights experts.** Attendants came from universities, national statistical institutes, development agencies, national ministries, national human rights commissions, international organizations and non-governmental

¹ Paper prepared by Mr Carlo Malaguerra, Director General of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO)

organizations active in the fields of development policy and human rights defense. Some 300 written contributions were submitted and discussed during five days of intensive work punctuated by 10 plenary sessions and 39 parallel workshops. Especially noteworthy were the high number and quality of contributions from developing and transition countries.

4. In her opening speech, Mrs. Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, summarized the spirit of the Conference as follows:

“The subject... Statistics, Development and Human Rights, is nothing less than a quest for a science of human dignity. When the target is human suffering, and the cause human rights, mere rhetoric is not adequate to the task in hand. What are needed are solid methodologies, careful techniques, and effective mechanisms to get the job done”.

5. And Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Office complemented:

“The theme... is a challenging one, some might even say mission impossible. Ever since human rights instruments were first adopted, we have been struggling to find statistical ways of measuring their success, their real impact on people’s lives. Skeptics say it’s difficult, others don’t want to be monitored. But victims of abuses and social and political exclusion deserve better than that. So this Conference marks a great step forward for development and human rights by bringing together the technical expertise of statisticians, development experts and human right specialists. It was time to do this (...) Statistical indicators make it possible to do many practical things for human right and development, including: make better policies and monitor their progress; identify unintended impacts of laws and practices; identify actors and hold them accountable; give early warning of potential violations; inform social dialogue; and expose issues that are neglected or silenced for public debate. (...) I am sure that in your hands mission impossible can become mission achievable.”

6. Indeed, expectations were high, as indicated by the high level political support and participation to the Conference’s debates. Addresses from the Minister of Finance of Niger, two Swiss Ministers, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Director General of the International Labour Office, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, the Executive Director of UNICEF, the Executive Director of the UNFPA, the Administrator of UNDP, the Representative of the President of the World Bank were delivered, claiming for increased efforts and results in developing accurate quantitative information and indicators to support human rights and human development policies.

7. The attendants to the Conference tackled the challenge with strong scientific commitment in the course of a series of sessions focusing on seven main thematic streams:

- fundamental conceptual issues and emerging monitoring methods;
- the role of statistical information within the democratic process;
- current and potential contribution of statistics for monitoring the implementation of civil and political rights;
- statistics and demographic analysis facing major human rights issues related to population structure and changes (women’s empowerment, minorities, refugees, displaced populations, demographic effects of war, etc.);
- human development, poverty and monitoring access to economic and social rights;
- statistics for monitoring the implementation of the rights of the child; and

- respect and promotion of human rights in the formulation and implementation of statistical public policies.

II. Statistics and human rights reporting: revealing new grounds to explore

8. In the introductory session Mr. Emad Omar, from Search of Common Ground (Jordan), presented an exhaustive picture of the 1990s' UN world summits and conferences, that have stressed the need for new or more efficient measurement of progress in the implementation of development and human rights. Many speakers commented on the strengths and weaknesses of the statistical component of initiatives and programs focusing on this aim that have been launched by intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, OECD, etc. In particular numerous interventions pointed out the challenges emerging from the Social Summit and the „Copenhagen +5“ Conference which took place in Geneva in June 2000, in which the UN-ECE and its Statistics Division took an active part. In this context, many participants stressed the increasing role that the UN Statistical Commission should play in guaranteeing consistent coordination of the statistical work that is being carried out by many international agencies in view of setting-up reliable indicators of progress requested by major UN world conferences and summits.

9. The Conference was however not intended to be an inter-agencies meeting, neither to serve as a platform for launching an intergovernmental process. Its original and major aim was to allow an informal and lively exchange of national experiences, and to inform statisticians, development specialists and human right experts on current and potential application of statistical methods to the monitoring and analysis of development and human rights issues. In this sense, the Conference showed that we assist today to an increasing application of quantitative methods to evidence political violence, genocide, brutal infringement of personal integrity of target human groups, as well as massive violations of civil and political rights. Such new applications of professional quantitative methods are not only enhancing and enriching the methods and practices of human rights reporting, but they are becoming an inherent part of the investigations of the International Criminal Tribunals. This was attested by authoritative papers presented by, among others, Prof. Herbert Spierer, Mr. Patrick Ball, Mr. Fernando Castañón, Mrs. Peggy Jennings and Mr. Helge Brunborg. As Mr. Patrick Ball stated,

“ Journalists, lawyers and physicians are relatively weaker at describing the “big picture” that can be accurately portrayed by statistical methods. Was the monthly number of killings increasing or decreasing in the first quarter of 1999? Were there more violations in province A or in province B? Were men more affected than women, or adults relative to children? These simple quantitative evaluations may be important questions when linked to political processes. (...) Simple descriptive statistics based on properly gathered data can address these questions more precisely than the kinds of casual assessments that non-quantitative observers often make. (...) Non-quantitative analysts do address questions that seem to call for descriptive statistics, and they often get the interpretation correct, or nearly so. However, three areas in which non-quantitative analysts often do not get the interpretation correct – and which they cannot defend scientifically even if they do get the interpretation correct – are: estimates of the magnitude of violations, bias that may have affected the data collection or interpretation, and relative proportions of responsibility among perpetrators. Poor information management and inappropriate statistical analysis can lead to embarrassing reversals of findings once proper methods are applied. In human rights work, reversing findings can be politically devastating.”

10. Such a description of the role of statistics in human rights reporting raised particular interest of representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and National Commissions for Human Rights (CHRs). A lively debate led to clarify the status of a possible contribution of statisticians to the work of NGOs and HRCs, that should be considered **as a strict professional contribution to enhance fair, scientific-based reporting, and not as a militancy component of the advocacy action.** Indeed, many NGOs and HRCs require various forms of professional support (training, scientific advice, evaluation of expertise, reporting services, etc.) in order to increase their quantitative analysis capacities. In this sense, the Conference showed that projects carried out by authoritative scientific institutions such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS - "science and human rights program") could serve as valuable examples of the various forms of co-operation that statisticians could develop with NGOs and HRCs.

11. Many speakers stressed that the contribution of professional statistical skills to human rights reporting has not only to do with measurement of the magnitude of violations, it should also aim at **benchmarking progress in the implementation of human rights over time.** In this sense, the contribution of statistics could be determinant for allowing effective assessment of key public policies as well as for the evaluation of governmental redressing action.

12. The Conference showed moreover that professional application of statistical methods could considerably enhance the quality and accuracy of numerous **policy-oriented research programs** that are being carried out by universities, research institutes and independent organizations in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. In this regard, the Conference allowed researchers from various regions of the world to create links and to discuss on their current projects. Moreover, it also allowed the attendants to get a better picture of the large variety of initiatives taken by organizations active in different aspects of human rights research, such as the ERF, Graamen, the AAAS, the International Council on Human Rights Policy, etc. In other terms, the Conference not only revealed new grounds to explore, but also created the conditions of mutual knowledge and communication that were required for starting the exploration of those new grounds. This is perhaps one of the most important achievements of Montreux: an international, multi-disciplinary and cross-institutional network of experts was born in Montreux and committed to further work.

III. Statistics and the human rights approach to development issues

13. As indicated in its title, the whole conception of the Conference was based on a human rights approach to development issues. Indeed, while development and human rights have long been pursued in isolation from one another, the two concepts are now being reintegrated. For the UN, the question of indicators arose in the context of the Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and its Common Country Assessment process (CCA), into which a rights-based approach to development was to be integrated. As pointed out in a brilliant intervention of Mr Craig G. Mokhiber, from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the challenge consists today in the need for building solid, reliable and consistent **indicators for rights-based development.** Only such kind of indicators would allow meaningful measure of human development as mirroring effective access to human dignity:

“ A rights-based approach to development is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that... integrates the norms, standards, and principles of the international human

rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development. The norms and standards are those contained in the wealth of international treaties and declarations... The principles include those of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment and direct (and express) linkage to the international human rights instruments and standards themselves. Approaching development from this perspective creates particular demands for data that are not satisfied by traditionally restrictive socio-economic indicators alone. As demonstrated by the CCA development experience, the existence of a number of important gaps in the availability of appropriate indicators is presenting difficult challenges to those seeking to actually implement rights-based approaches to development. (...) We should integrate the "rights element" into the socio-economic indicators currently and broadly employed (...) The "right to health" is something quite different from "health." Because rights-based development focuses on accountability and incorporates notions of entitlement and obligation, simply measuring status, or degree of realization, is not sufficient (...) Accountability means beginning with the identification of (1) an explicit standard against which to measure performance, (2) a specific person/institution owing performance (3) a particular right-holder (or claim-holder) to whom performance is owed; (4) a mechanism of redress, delivery and accountability. (...) Data must be disaggregated further, to test equality and non-discrimination, and must be read in context. Indicators themselves must be designed as tools of development, not weapons of critique."

14. The role of statistical information and indicators as **policy-oriented tools** was broadly discussed during several sessions focusing on **monitoring human development**, as well as on methods for **measuring poverty** and **assessing access to economic and social rights**. An impressive number of communications from transition and developing countries recurrently showed the growing importance of such measurement tools for the design and implementation of national development policies. However, many attendants also stressed a dramatic paradox: the problems of measuring extreme poverty, which remains one of the most flagrant violations of human rights in the world, will remain unsolved as long as the **poorest countries lack technical and financial means for assessing their own situation**. Now, it is obvious that the reinforcement of the statistical capabilities of developing countries constitutes a prior and unavoidable condition for more rigorous observation of progress in terms of development and human rights.

15. Representatives of national development agencies raised the point of the **potential contribution of statistical information and analysis to the evaluation of international development aid**. The fact is that existing methods for evaluating public bilateral and multilateral aid mostly rely on qualitative appreciation of consultants and field specialists who often ignore possibilities of statistical landmarks that would allow effective benchmarking of direct, indirect and multiplier effects of aid. Moreover, important aid programs focusing on national development of whole public sectors (education, water supply, etc.) rarely include a component aiming at building national statistical capacity that would allow to monitor progress due to this aid and to identify unexpected positive or perverse effects. In this regard, it was noticed that if in some countries, development agencies have built professional teams in charge of statistical analysis and technical co-operation in the field of statistics, in many other countries such professional skills are still ignored or considered as merely in terms of accounting services.

IV. Statistics, democracy and governance

16. The debates on the role of statistics and indicators within the design of development policies clearly showed that statistical information should not any more be confined to a role of mere technical support for governmental services in charge of policy design and evaluation. “Official” statistics must play the role of **an open information system aiming at promoting public awareness and increased participation of citizens in public affairs**. As Mr. Hasan Abu-Libdeh, President of the Palestinian Central Statistical Office stated:

“Maximum return from investment in statistical activities can be achieved only when we reach the stage in which stakeholders and public at large perceive the statistics we produce as a public good. It becomes then a very effective tool for energising public debate about government policies in various fields, leading to transparency and accountability within the government and civil society.”

17. Indeed, during the last decade, many countries and regions of the world embarked in two parallel processes that are highly significant in terms of human development: democratization and broader access to information. As a result of this, there is an increasing public demand for reliable, impartial and fresh statistical information that explains the economic and social development. The citizen feels that there can be no fair or accurate diagnosis without proper statistics, failing which one descends into the realm of rumour. And the public institutions that produce the statistical information are increasingly being considered as **impartial central actors within the democratic debate**: their role consist in shedding light on democratic debate by making it clearer and more understandable so that everybody can take part in it. Now, as Mr. Jean-Pierre Behmoiras, from INSEE (France), pointed out,

“it is thus indispensable for public statistics to be, for their part also, produced in democratic conditions, that is to say in a transparent and consensual manner. Should the opposite be the case, statistics would be challenged by public opinion.”

18. Indeed, the contribution of official statistics to the promotion of human development and human rights can be effective only if professionals and institutions in charge of producing such statistics are impregnated of the values and principles that are inherent to a democratic conception of human society. In this sense, **scientific independence, political impartiality, professional ethics, as well as relevance, timeliness and accessibility of statistics to the whole society** are all essential characteristics that National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) should adopt and firmly preserve. The Conference not only reiterated the crucial importance of this issue, but it also allowed many development specialists and human right experts to get to know of the achievements that the international statistical community has reached in adopting and implementing the **UN Chart of “Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics”**.

19. Many papers and oral interventions commented on the links between official statistics, support to democratic process and good governance. It was noticed that national experiences in various regions of the world clearly attest that **enhanced statistical capacity normally increases transparency of governmental activities and constitutes a powerful spring for injecting professional skills in public administrations**. In many transition and developing countries NSIs are among the most professional public institutions and are thus often considered as models by the civil society and by national planners who aim at developing modern, fair and rigorous public management. However in numerous countries the institutional situation of NSIs with regard to the political power appears precarious: here, lack of modern

legal basis and authoritarian pressures from the political power can easily jeopardize the impartiality and scientific independence of official statistics.

20. In this regard, there is therefore a need to pay increased attention to ensure a “statistical component” in the international aid to transition and developing countries. This aid should better help to increase national statistical and analytical capacities, and in particular **capacities to monitor governmental action, such as public spending**. As Mr. Michael Ward underlined,

“ Part of the problem of monitoring governments and what they do is that there is no overarching international agency responsible for monitoring and overseeing the role of government as an agency for public good, as an agency which delivers goods and services to different disadvantaged sections of the society. There is no agency which shows how efficaciously and how efficiently governments dispense these tasks (...) So, the bottom line is that the way in which governments deliver their goods and services is not well monitored. And at the moment it appears, particularly in developing countries, that the benefits of governmental social spending are primarily to richer households, who have access to services and who have a say in how the services are delivered. (...) It is the same everywhere that the bulk of the spending so far, unless you begin to break down how that spending is allocated to income groups, will end primarily in the richer communities, in the richer households, and not with the poorest people. So the issue of social justice, the issue of provision of goods and services to poor people, their basic human rights, still tend to be ignored and you still don't have a mechanism in there for redressing.”

21. The task of monitoring governmental action therefore should be developed at the national level on the basis of increased statistical capacity. The Conference showed that current initiatives, such as a project launched by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (presented by Mr. Awa Thiongane) are promisingly enhancing the role of statistics in defining the standards and assessing the progress of governance. But, of course, this aim could be reached only if from now on NSIs are fully recognized by law and in practice as true independent “statistical authorities”. And here, once again, the international aid could play a major role in **reinforcing the institutional building component of existing and future technical assistance programs in the field of statistics**. As Tony Williams, from DFID (United Kingdom) summarized,

“ the papers presented at the Conference confirms that... statistics are fundamental to provide transparency, accountability and underpin democratic processes. It is important that approaches to statistics, and supporting technical co-operation, are consistent with the values underlying human rights. This co-operation should highlight the role for a Code of Conduct of statisticians and how this does link to human rights values. It should insist on the need to raise awareness of civil society of their rights in relation to access to statistics for effective participation in, and commentary on, government policy and performance.”

V. Translating the spirit of Montreux in tangible reality

22. At the request of many attendants and after a large consultation of the sessions' chairpersons, the author of this paper used the opportunity of the closing session for presenting a summary of **conclusions of the Conference**. These conclusions, as all the papers presented during the Conference, are available on the Internet at the page www.iaos2000.admin.ch. We

will therefore limit ourselves to point out here that these conclusions are turned towards **tangible follow-up action**.

23. The fact is that most of the attendants to the Conference felt that the innovative “spirit of Montreux” should be continued and materialized into concrete work. They felt that a real international network was just born in Montreux and that this should now be nourished and allowed to grow. They agreed that the Conference should be considered as the starting point of a process and that the perspectives opened by the debates of Montreux should be followed by concrete action. Four basic elements were in particular identified as key orientations for a follow-up action:

- The **multidisciplinary and cross-institutional approach** that brings together and stimulates dialogue between scientists, analysts, political actors and decision-makers on the relevance and the consistency of statistical information and indicators for measuring the implementation of human rights and the effectiveness of human development.
- The capacity to reach actors both at the national and at the international levels, and to create interaction between them. The agenda of the international agencies pushes them to strengthen their capacity regarding statistical information and their access to it, and this is a powerful motor. While ultimately all efforts tend towards the **empowerment of national actors to develop and to use quantitative information**. Hence the need is to directly involve national actors in these efforts, in addition to reinforcing statistical activities directly dictated by national priorities.
- Any follow-up action should focus on **effective mobilization of the statistical know-how and transfer of expertise**. The Conference has shown numerous instances where this was in action but it has also shown numerous areas where increased professional use of statistical methods and better quantitative based analysis are needed.
- Finally, as noticed above, the Conference has clearly shown that the **reinforcement of the statistical capabilities of the developing countries** constitutes a prior and unavoidable condition for more rigorous observation of progress in terms of development and human rights. In this sense, any follow-up strategy should include or be strongly linked with substantial commitment in on going or planned programs aiming at strengthening the statistical capacity of development countries.

24. On the basis of these key-orientations, since the end of the Conference, many initiatives have been taken or are being planned at the national and international level in order to translate the spirit of Montreux into tangible reality. Among these initiatives, one in particular merits to be mentioned because it shows how complex international institutions can openly and formally take initiatives in areas that are often considered as “too sensible”. Indeed, Mr. Yves Franchet, Director General of **Eurostat**, organized large consultations of the services of the European Commission and of NSIs of the European Union concerning the capacity and the readiness to develop statistical information relevant for analyzing the human development and the human rights situation in Europe. The issue will be put into the regular meetings’ agenda of heads of agencies of the European statistical system.

25. In the same spirit, at the national level, several NSIs from Southern Mediterranean countries are actively launching projects that directly refer to the Conclusions of Montreux. For instance, the Direction of Statistics of **Morocco** is developing an ambitious program of statistical monitoring of the implementation of the rights of the children, as well as a study on

the information needs of institutional users of statistics in the fields of social development and human rights. The Central Bureau of Statistics of **Palestine** is launching a vast program of indicators aiming at monitoring current deterioration of the social and economic conditions of the population. The National Statistical Institute of **Jordan** also plans to launch a program for developing indicators and tools that will serve to monitor the human rights situation in the country.

26. The Human Sciences Research Council of **South Africa** informed that it is currently initiating a new program that will focus on human development, including a human rights component. This institution is firmly committed within the implementation of a Conference follow-up action and offers in particular capacity for analysis of production from a statistical agency as well as for hosting projects focusing on monitoring governance and human rights issues. In a similar spirit, the **Philippines** participants to the Conference, all backgrounds merged, are launching a large program of multidisciplinary follow-up action on interaction between statistics, development and human rights in the Philippines. This program intends to be open and extended to other countries of the region.

27. The **Japan** Statistics Research Institute has taken concrete follow-up measures in the form of a special issue of its Bulletin fully dedicated to reflecting the Montreux Conference's debates and outcomes. The Institute also intends to include related topics in the academic sessions of the annual meeting of the Society of Economic Statistics of Japan in September 2001.

28. It is not possible to quote here the numerous initiatives taken and proposals of follow-up action formulated by many persons and institutions, and in particular by **non-governmental organizations** and **national human rights commissions**. To mention just a couple of them, the National Human Rights Commission of **Mexico** expressed interest in continuing the dialogue and collaboration with statisticians, development specialists and human rights experts, that it considers essential for progressing in national human rights diagnosis. In a similar spirit, the **Interparliamentary Union** is undertaking a series of actions aiming at raising awareness on statistical tools for human rights and development policy-making among parliamentarians.

29. Some attendants to the Conference formulated concrete proposals oriented towards **mobilization of the existing statistical know-how** at the service of human rights monitoring (Prof. Herbert Spierer, Columbia University and AAAS Science and Human Rights Programme). Others suggest actions aiming at **applying technological advances** to developing a world-wide system of housing and property registration records that could reinforce protection of housing rights (the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions' proposal). These, among many other proposals, clearly indicate that the Montreux debates and conclusions were not mere rhetoric, and that concrete expectations are now to be fulfilled.

VI. The follow-up meeting (New York, 8 March 2001) ... and forward

30. In the closing session of the Conference, the Swiss organizers committed to undertake a large consultation on the ways and means to launch a sustainable follow-up action and, on the basis of this, to formulate in the short run a concrete proposal. This was done clock-likely six months after the end of the Conference: indeed, on 8 March 2001, Switzerland convened an informal meeting of international organizations, national institutions and personalities that supported the Montreux initiative, that took place in the UNO headquarters in New York. The discussion, nourished by numerous interventions, showed that the Conclusions of Montreux

concern two distinct sorts of tasks that require fundamentally different kinds of follow-up and support:

- **The tasks that are or could be performed by the intergovernmental organizations:**
 - **Map making of international and UN initiatives and projects** in the fields of human rights indicators and monitoring methods;
 - **Inter-agencies co-ordination** (UN Development Group, CCA indicator framework, PRSP work, Human Development Report, etc.);
 - **Support to treaty bodies (UN Committees)** in identifying and using indicators and statistical materials as basis for monitoring the implementation of instruments;
 - **Definition and publication of human rights indicators** (mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Human rights: civil and political rights, economic and social rights, right to development);
 - **Definition and publication of indicators of development, poverty and governance** (mandate of the OECD-DAC and various UN agencies and programs);
 - **International aid aiming at strengthening national statistical capacity building** (Paris 21 project, World Bank trust fund, EU programs of statistical co-operation with third countries, etc.).

31. The situation concerning the execution of these tasks is paradoxical, because while a number of organizations have received strong mandates and are currently facing urgent requests from the international community, they are chronically lacking human and financial resources. This situation is particularly dramatic in the case of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), that can allocate only less than 0,3 person-year for carrying out the task of “developing indicators of human rights”. The OECD-DAC secretariat also knows a similar situation. The Montreux follow-up concerning this group of tasks should therefore primarily consist in lobbying with national governments in order to obtain **voluntary contributions** that would allow organizations and programs such as the UNOHCHR to build up professional teams in order to decently fulfil their mandates.

- **The tasks that, being broader and more innovative, require a new flexible framework and specific methods of work:**
 - **Collaboration with and interlinking between existing policy-oriented action, statistical work and research programs** of universities, research institutes, NSIs and NGOs such as ERF, AAS-HRP, International Council on Human Rights Policy, etc.;
 - **Organization and implementation of action-research projects, support operations and pilot studies** (definition, world-wide identification of experts, team constituency and follow-up, publication of results);
 - **Ad hoc reporting and advice** to international organizations, development agencies, NSIs and governmental bodies in charge of human rights and development policies);
 - **Organization of ad hoc scientific support, consultancy and training** at the request of NGOs, National Human Rights Commissions and actors of the civil society;
 - **Information and collaboration with relevant professional and scientific bodies** (national science foundations, specialized associations, ISI family, etc.);
 - **Facilitating services and support to the international network** (facilitating contacts and twinning, information services, data base, web page, etc.).

32. The main idea concerning this group of tasks consists in integrating and interlinking in an appropriate frame the existing statistical work and policy-oriented research that are carried out by NSIs, universities, research institutes and NGOs. This would allow **to join forces in order to make available the existing know-how and to provide high quality scientific support,**

reporting services, training and professional advice to national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations active in the fields of human rights and development policies.

33. In concrete terms, the proposal consists in a progressive weaving and launching of **an international research and consultancy network on statistics, development and human rights policies**. This network should reflect the Montreux Conference's aims, constituency and dynamics. It should thus be of a cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional and non-governmental nature, but it should remain firmly oriented to the promotion of quantitative methods and statistical tools in the analysis of development problems and in the monitoring of the achievement of human rights. Of course, such a network should be serviced by **a light mechanism or "focal point" that would act as facilitator** for identifying expertness, organizing research projects, pilot studies, consultancy and reporting services, as well as for enhancing North/South partnership and twinning between institutions and between experts. Such a focal point would rest with **a core secretariat** and offer to its partners (international agencies, statistical services, NGOs, etc.) clearing-house services as well as ad hoc support and advice.

34. This proposal is based on a firm commitment of Switzerland to continue to support the Montreux Initiative and its follow-up. This should provide the necessary means for starting its concrete implementation, progressive co-sharing of responsibilities with other donors and final ownership by all partners involved. Nevertheless, we are not intending to make this process a Swiss initiative, and therefore possible partnership must be investigated with other donors that could contribute to this process in different forms and with different means.

35. The attendants to the follow-up meeting welcomed the main lines of the Swiss proposal. We therefore intend to prepare with interested partners **a core program document that should lead to the establishment of a structure in charge of servicing the international network** on statistics, development and human rights policies. As Prof. Herbert Spierer, from Columbia University, stated in the meeting of New York, the main issue consists now in involving a large number of individual statisticians and NSIs in the Montreux follow-up process.

36. In this perspective, we are glad to invite all the members of the Conference of European Statisticians to take an active part in the Montreux follow-up process. We are convinced that they could make an invaluable contribution to the process of weaving and launching an efficient international network on statistics, development and human rights policies. We are also convinced that when determined commitment to undertake concrete action meets with adequate, professional and timely facilitating services and support, it will then materialize in concrete results in terms of more responsible statistics, better governance, improved human rights reporting and better benchmarking of human development.

- - - - -